

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGION 7E: East Central

Covers counties:
Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec
Mille Lacs, and Pine

2022 REGIONAL PROFILE

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DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION CHANGE

Economic Development Region 7E – East Central includes 5 counties, located in the Central Minnesota planning region. Region 7E was home to 171,703 people in 2021, comprising 3.0% of the state’s total population. The region saw a 4.8% population increase since 2010, making it the seventh largest of the 13 economic development regions (EDRs) in total population, and the sixth fastest growing. In comparison, the state of Minnesota saw a 7.6% gain from 2010 to 2021 (Table 1).

Table 1. Population Change 2010-2021				
	2010 Population	2021 Estimates	2010-2021 Change	
			Number	Percent
Region 7E	163,789	171,703	+7,914	+4.8%
Chisago Co.	53,887	57,469	+3,582	+6.6%
Isanti Co.	37,816	41,906	+4,090	+10.8%
Kanabec Co.	16,239	16,159	-80	-0.5%
Mille Lacs Co.	26,097	26,867	+770	+3.0%
Pine Co.	29,750	29,302	-448	-1.5%
Minnesota	5,303,925	5,707,390	+403,465	+7.6%

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates](#)

Chisago County is the largest county in Region 7E and is the 18th largest county of 87 in the state, with just under 57,500 people in 2021. It added 3,582 people, a 6.6% increase, since 2010, the 20th fastest growth rate. Isanti County experienced the largest growth in the region with an increase of 4,090 people and now has nearly 42,000 people. The next largest county is Pine County with 29,302 people but has declined in population since 2010, while Mille Lacs County has increased slightly and has 26,867 people, and Kanabec County is the smallest county in the region with 16,159 people, the 52nd largest county in the state.

COMPONENTS OF POPULATION CHANGE

With an aging population, Region 7E has experienced a natural decrease – more deaths than births – of -177 people from 2020-2021. However the region gained population because of net migration with an increase of 2,776 residents moving into the area, mostly from other parts of the state or U.S. In total, there was an increase of 2,580 people due to the combination of migration and natural increase (Table 2).

Without much international immigration, Region 7E is now home to 2,913 foreign born residents, or about 1.7% of the total population. The number of immigrants in the region

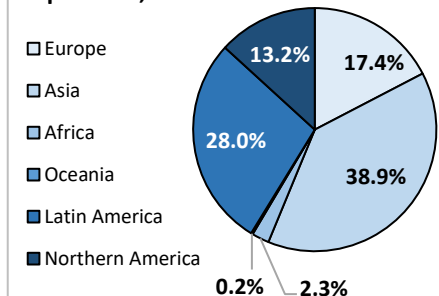
Table 2. Estimates of the Components of Population Change, 2020-2021							
	Total Change	Natural Increase	Vital Events		Net Migration		
			Births	Deaths	Total	Inter-national	Domestic
Region 7E	2,580	-177	2,070	2,247	+2,776	+15	+2,761
Minnesota	896	12,512	79,493	66,981	-11,734	+4,213	-15,947

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program](#)

increased by 26.8% since 2010, higher than the statewide growth rate of 8.2%. Just under 40% (1,132 people) of these immigrants were from Asia, while the second largest number was from Central and South America, accounting for 28% of the region’s foreign-born. Lastly, there were 506 people from Europe, but this population has decreased since 2010 (Figure 1).

Based on year of entry, Region 7E’s foreign born population was “older” than the rest of the state. About 22% of the region’s immigrants entered the U.S. since 2010 and another 22.2% entered between 2000 and 2009, compared to 27.6% and 30.9% statewide. The remaining 56% of immigrants in the region settled in the U.S. prior to 2000. Foreign-born residents have a younger age profile than the native-born population, with 52.4% being between 25 and 54 years of age, compared to 37.1% of the total population. About 14.5% of the foreign-born population has less than a high school degree while another 34.8% is a high school graduate. Meanwhile, 19% of foreign-born people in the region have a bachelor’s or higher degree.

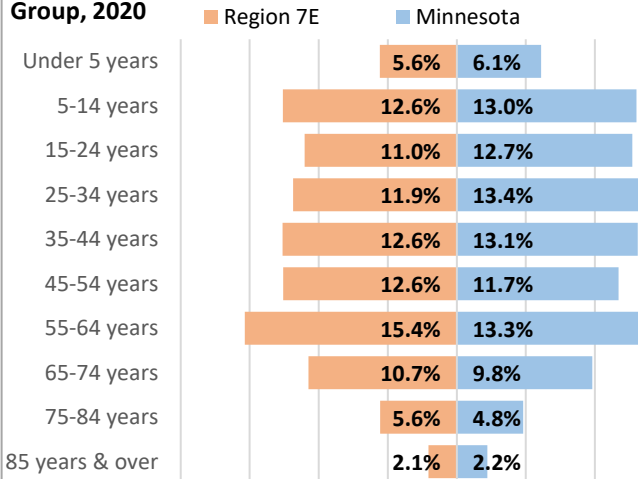
Figure 1. EDR 7E Place of Birth for the Foreign Born Population, 2020



POPULATION BY AGE GROUP

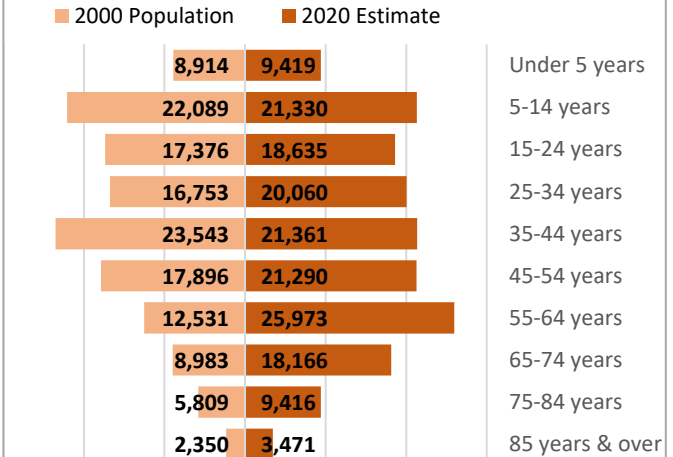
Region 7E has an older population than the rest of the state, with 18.4% of residents aged 65 years and over, compared to 16.8% statewide. In addition, Region 7E had a much higher percentage of people in the 45 to 64 year old age group, but consequently had a lower percentage of people in the 25- to 44-year-old age group, typically the leading edge of “prime working years”. A large portion of the area’s population is a part of the Baby Boom generation, which is creating a significant shift in regional demographics over time. Between 2000 and 2020, the group 55 years or older added more than 27,000 residents (see Figure 2 and Figure 3).

Figure 2. Percentage of Population by Age Group, 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates

Figure 3. Region 7E Population Pyramid, 2000-2020



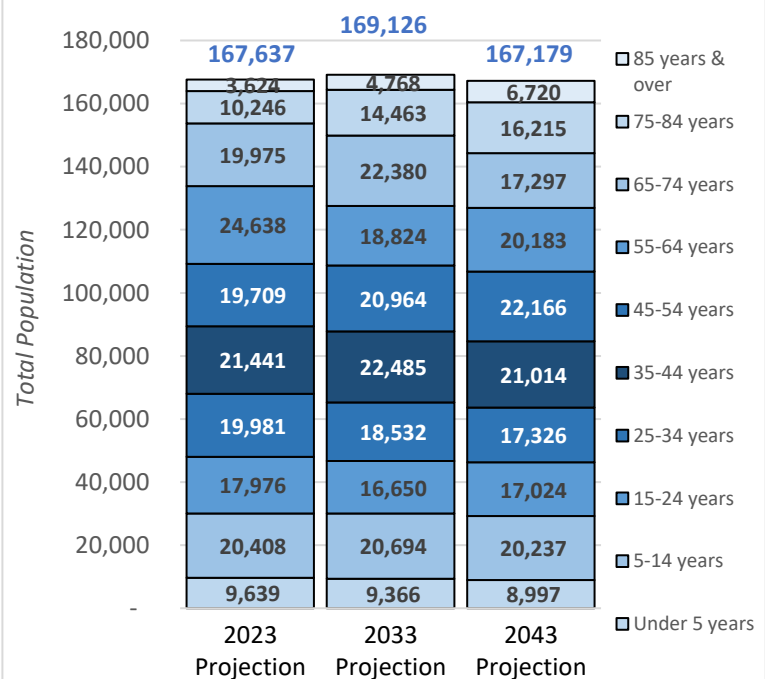
Source: U.S. Census Bureau

POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP

Despite the more rapid recent growth, Region 7E is projected to experience a slight population decline in the next 20 years. According to the [State Demographic Center](#), Region 7E is expected to lose just 458 residents from 2023 to 2043, a 0.3% decrease (see Figure 4). By comparison the state of Minnesota is projected to grow 9.4%.

Much of this population growth is expected to happen in older age groups. Region 7E is projected to add 9,000 people aged 75 years and over, as well as about 2,500 people in the 45- to 54-year-old age group. However, Region 7E is projected to lose over 4,800 people under 45 years of age, and about 7,100 people in the 55 to 74 year old age group – as current Baby Boomers continue to age.

Figure 4. Region 7E Population Projections by Age Group, 2023-2043



Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

POPULATION BY RACE

Region 7E's population is less diverse than the state's, but is becoming more diverse over time. In 2020, 90.5% of the region's residents reported white alone as their race, compared to 77.5% of residents statewide. At 1.9%, Region 7E had a higher percentage of American Indian or Alaska Natives than the state, but otherwise had much smaller percentages of people of all other race and origin groups, especially Black or African American, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino origin (Table 3).

With just under 8,000 people, the largest racial or ethnic group other than White is people of Two or More Races, which increased 246% from 2010 to 2020. Conversely, the region saw a 0.5% decline in the number of white residents. Every other group saw increases and four groups grew faster than 30% over two decades.

Table 3. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2020	Region 7E				Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	Change from 2010-2020 Numeric/Percent		Percent	Change from 2010-2020
Total	169,123	100.0%	+6,730	+4.1%	100.0%	+8.9%
White	153,131	90.5%	-791	-0.5%	77.5%	-2.6%
Black or African American	1,799	1.1%	+67	+3.9%	7.0%	+54.9%
American Indian & Alaska Native	3,177	1.9%	+405	+14.6%	1.2%	+24.0%
Asian & Other Pac. Islander	1,772	1.0%	+676	+61.7%	5.3%	+46.4%
Some Other Race	1,279	0.8%	+712	+125.6%	3.0%	+122.8%
Two or More Races	7,965	4.7%	+5,661	+245.7%	6.1%	+221.3%
Hispanic or Latino origin	3,779	2.2%	+978	+34.9%	6.1%	+47.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016-2020 American Community Survey

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

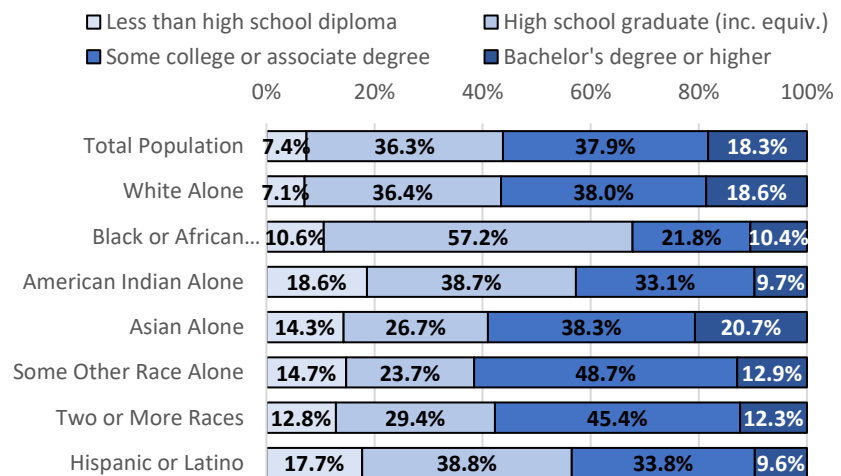
With 29.3% of adults aged 25 years and over having a college degree, Region 7E has lower educational attainment than the state, where 45.2% of adults have an associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree. However, 12% of adults in Region 7E have an associate degree, which outpaces the state. Another 25.5% have some college experience, but no degree.

Table 4. Educational Attainment for the Population Aged 25 years & Over	Region 7E		Minnesota
	Number	Percent	Percent
Total, 25 years & over	129,664	100.0%	100.0%
Less than high school	10,867	8.4%	7.2%
High school graduate (incl. equiv.)	47,761	36.8%	24.7%
Some college, no degree	33,105	25.5%	22.8%
Associate degree	15,500	12.0%	11.0%
Bachelor's degree	16,008	12.3%	23.0%
Advanced degree	6,423	5.0%	11.2%

Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Educational attainment varied significantly by race and ethnicity in Region 7E. In addition to overall educational attainment being lower in the region than the state, the percentage of people of other races with less than a high school diploma was even higher. Roughly two-thirds of Black or African American residents in the region had a high school diploma or less, as did just over 56% of American Indians and Hispanic or Latinos. In contrast, a higher share of people of Some Other Race, Two or More Races, and Asians had attended some college, but did not earn a degree (Figure 5). Asians also had the highest share of those with a bachelor's or higher.

Figure 5. Educational Attainment for the population aged 25 years & over by Race or Origin, 2020



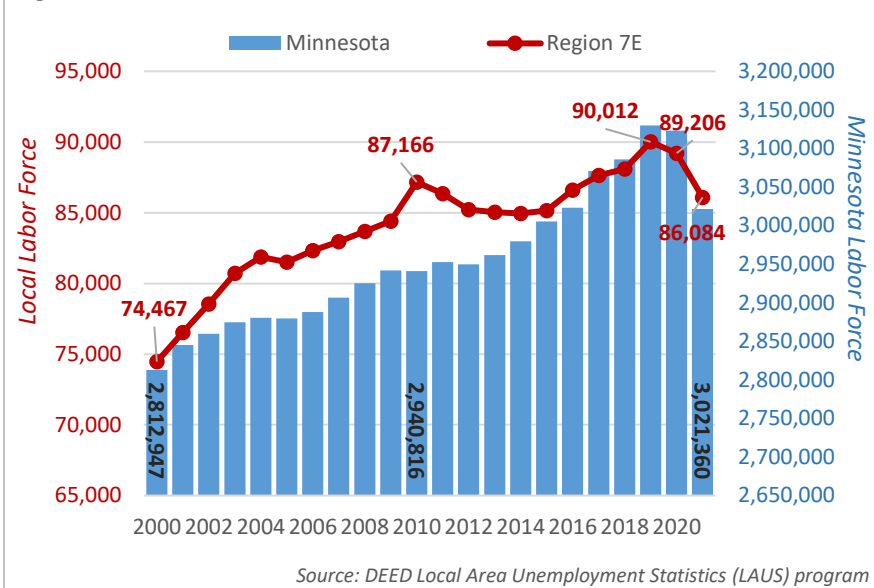
Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

LABOR FORCE

LABOR FORCE CHANGE

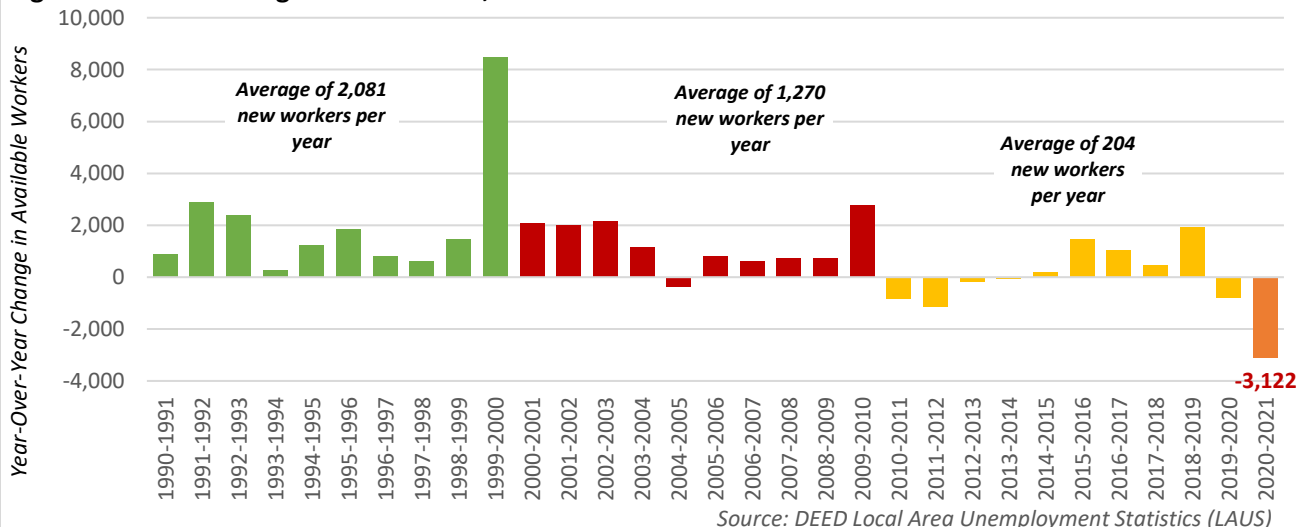
According to data from DEED's [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#) program, Region 7E had an annual average labor force count of just over 86,000 workers through 2021. The recent decrease of the labor force opposed that of concurrent population growth. After rising rapidly in the early part of the century, labor force slowed after 2010 before again increasing into 2019 (Figure 6). Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the labor force declined precipitously, losing nearly 4,000 workers over two years. With low unemployment rates, the labor market in Region 7E remains even tighter than before the pandemic, with about 3,760 unemployed workers actively seeking work in 2021, down from a peak of over 9,000 workers in 2009 and 6,800 in 2020.

Figure 6. Annual Labor Force Estimates 2000-2021



Averaging a net gain of 2,081 additional labor force participants per year between 1990 and 2000, employers in Region 7E were able to tap into a large and growing pool of talented workers. Although the regional labor force and economy continue to grow, the rate of labor force growth slowed considerably, demonstrated by Region 7E adding an average of only 204 workers per year from 2010 to 2020. Finally, the trend was punctuated by a loss of more than 3,100 into 2021 (Figure 7). Increasingly tight labor markets and a growing scarcity of workers is now recognized as one of the most significant barriers to future economic growth in Region 7E. In the face of these constraints, it has become evident that a more diverse workforce in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, and immigration has been and will continue to be a vital source of the workers that employers need to succeed. Businesses have and will continue to adjust to slower labor force growth and maximize collaboration with local education partners.

Figure 7. Annual Change in Labor Force, 1990-2021



LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS

In step with the region's projected population changes, applying current labor force participation rates to population projections by age group, as shown in Figure 4, would lead to declines in workforce numbers in Region 7E over the next decade (Table 5).

Though the size of the labor force is expected to decline, the age composition of the workforce will also see a significant shift over time, with a steady gain in the number of workers aged 45 to 54 years and gains in workers aged 65 years and over against large declines in the number of workers aged 55 to 64 years. Smaller declines are expected for workers under 44. The region may lose about 4,000 workers in the 55- to 64-year-old age group as the Baby Boom generation moves through the population pyramid. The 25- to 54-year-old age group will still be the largest part of the labor force, accounting for 61% of the total. This will likely lead to an even tighter labor market in the future, with employers needing to respond to changing labor force availability.

	2023 Labor Force Projection	2033 Labor Force Projection	2023-2033 Change	
			Numeric	Percent
16 to 19 years	4,255	3,975	-280	-6.6%
20 to 24 years	6,741	6,179	-562	-8.3%
25 to 44 years	34,945	34,604	-342	-1.0%
45 to 54 years	16,874	17,948	+1,074	+6.4%
55 to 64 years	16,910	12,920	-3,990	-23.6%
65 to 74 years	4,675	5,238	+563	+12.0%
75 years & over	997	1,382	+385	+38.7%
Total Labor Force	85,397	82,246	-3,152	-3.7%

Source: calculated from Minnesota State Demographic Center population projections and 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

With 65% of people aged 16 years and over in the labor force, Region 7E had lower labor force participation rates than the state's 69.3%. The region had lower labor force participation rates than the state in all but the oldest age group, and the overall rate was even lower because a higher percentage of Region 7E's labor force was in older age groups (Table 6).

Likewise, the region had lower participation rates than the state in all race groups except Asian or Other Pacific Islander; and higher unemployment rates for all but one minority group – Black or African Americans. In sum, unemployment rates were highest for young people and people of color. In addition, there were 5,587 workers with disabilities in the regional labor force. Increasing labor force participation rates and lowering unemployment rates for groups that have barriers would help grow the region's labor force.

Age Group	Region 7E			Minnesota	
	Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate
Total Labor Force	87,294	65.0%	4.6%	69.3%	3.8%
16 to 19 years	4,358	53.9%	9.6%	52.0%	11.0%
20 to 24 years	7,175	83.1%	7.3%	83.8%	6.2%
25 to 44 years	33,930	84.4%	4.8%	88.7%	3.4%
45 to 54 years	19,606	85.6%	4.1%	87.6%	2.8%
55 to 64 years	17,362	68.6%	3.0%	73.0%	3.1%
65 to 74 years	3,971	23.4%	2.9%	28.4%	2.5%
75 years & over	871	7.2%	0.8%	6.8%	2.4%
Employment Characteristics by Gender					
Male	46,226	66.9%	5.4%	73.0%	4.2%
Female	41,047	63.0%	3.7%	65.6%	3.4%
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin					
White alone	82,930	65.7%	4.2%	68.9%	3.2%
Black or African American	369	24.0%	7.3%	71.3%	8.7%
American Indian & Alaska Native	868	50.5%	18.6%	57.9%	12.7%
Asian or Other Pacific Islanders	986	70.4%	7.4%	72.0%	4.0%
Some Other Race	399	81.9%	7.3%	72.7%	6.2%
Two or More Races	1,722	61.8%	12.0%	73.3%	7.1%
Hispanic or Latino	1,653	62.1%	8.5%	76.5%	6.3%
Employment Characteristics by Disability					
With Any Disability	5,587	50.8%	9.2%	52.9%	8.9%
Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment					
Population 25 to 64 years	70,908	80.2%	4.2%	84.4%	3.2%
Less than H.S. Diploma	3,439	60.8%	5.1%	66.3%	4.5%
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent	21,975	73.9%	2.5%	77.9%	2.5%
Some College or Assoc. Degree	30,367	84.1%	3.5%	85.2%	3.3%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	15,124	89.5%	2.3%	90.0%	1.9%

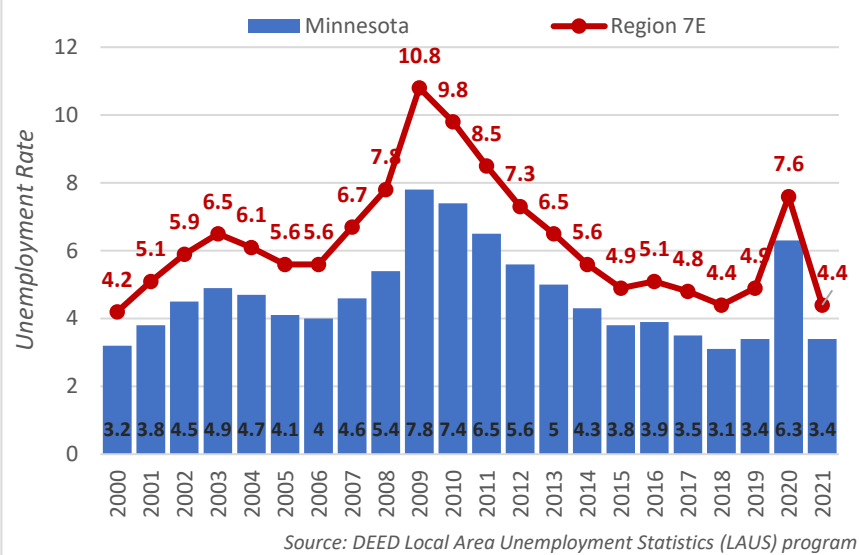
Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Region 7E has consistently had higher unemployment rates than the state, typically hovering around 1.5% above the state rate.

According to DEED's [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#), Region 7E's rate rose as high as 10.8% in 2009, which was the highest of the 13 EDRs, and 3% above the state rate. Since then, the state and region's economies have recovered and unemployment rates have dropped, with Region 7E reporting 4.9% in 2019, before spiking to 7.6% in 2020. Rates then returned to near record lows in 2021. (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Unemployment Rates, 2000-2020

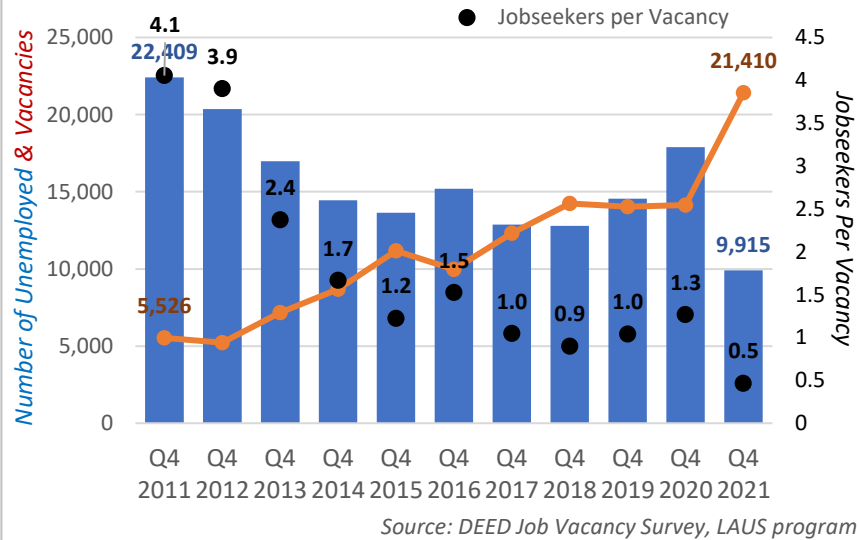


JOBSEEKERS PER VACANCY

As the number of available workers has declined, the region's labor market has tightened. One clear demonstration of this is the ratio of unemployed jobseekers per vacancy, which dipped to 0.9-to-1 in 2018 before rebounding slightly in 2019 and then to 1.3 in 2020. A recent steep increase in vacancies paired with declining unemployment led to an all-time low ratio of 0.5 in 2021 (Figure 9).

According to recent Job Vacancy Survey results, there were 21,410 openings reported by Central Minnesota employers compared to 9,915 unemployed jobseekers in the region. The ratio climbed as high as 4.1-to-1 in 2011.

Figure 9. Jobseekers Per Vacancy, 2011-2021



COMMUTE SHED AND LABOR SHED

According to commuting data from the [Census Bureau](#), Region 7E is a net labor exporter, having more workers than available jobs. In sum, 32,272 workers both lived and worked in Region 7E in 2019, while 15,843 workers drove into the region from surrounding counties for work, compared to 50,704 workers who lived in the region but drove to surrounding counties for work (Table 7 and Figure 10).

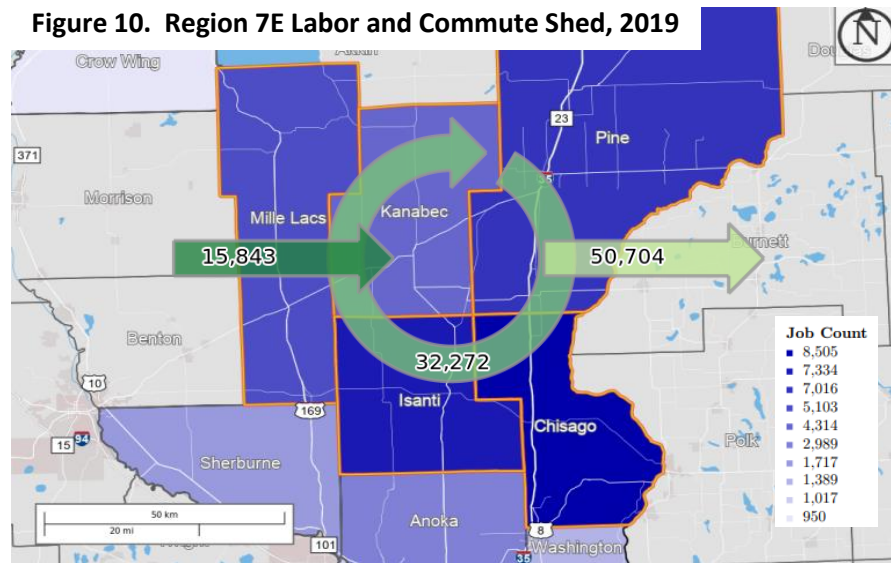
Table 7. Region 7E Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs), 2019	2019	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	48,115	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	15,843	32.9%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	32,272	67.1%
Living in the Selection Area	82,976	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	50,704	61.1%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	32,272	38.9%

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap](#)

Chisago County is the largest county and the largest employment center in the region and was the biggest draw for workers, followed by Isanti County, Pine County, Mille Lacs County, and Kanabec County is the smallest.

Most workers in the region commute to the Twin Cities metro area and Hennepin County, as well as to the northern and eastern counties like Ramsey, Anoka, and Washington County (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Region 7E Labor and Commute Shed, 2019

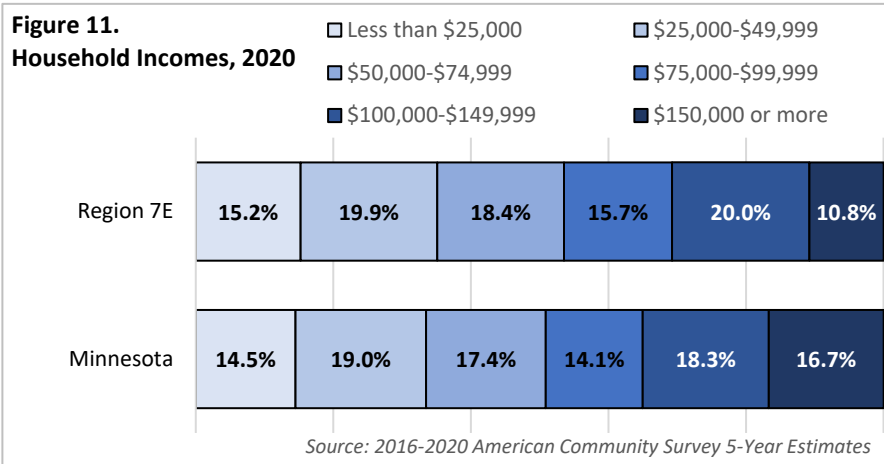


INCOMES, WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

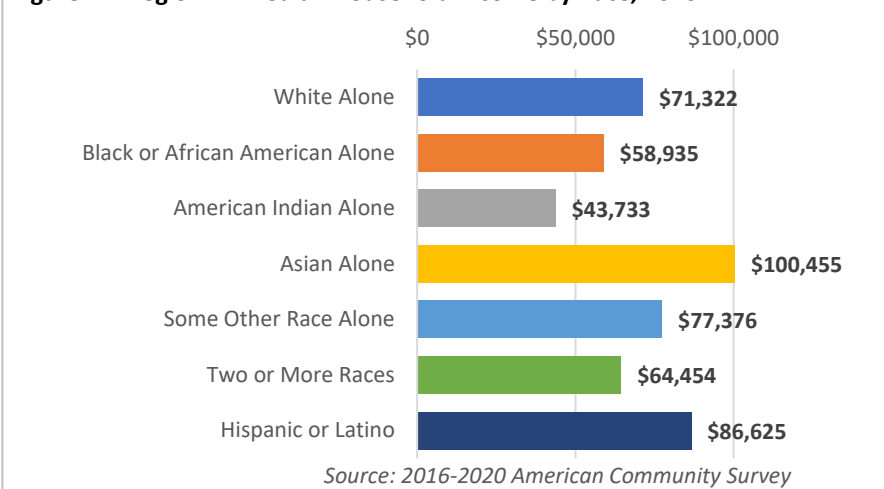
At \$71,170, median household incomes were lower in Region 7E than the state, where the median income in 2020 was \$73,382. Just over 35% of the households in the region had incomes below \$50,000 in 2020, similar to statewide. Similarly, only 30.8% of households in Region 7E earned over \$100,000 per year, compared to 35% percent of households statewide (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Household Incomes, 2020



Median household incomes varied by race or origin in the region. Asian households reported the highest incomes in Region 7E, with a median income that was about \$29,133 higher than for White households. Next highest were incomes for Hispanic or Latino households at \$86,625. In contrast, American Indian households reported much lower household incomes, however incomes for all races were similar unlike most of Minnesota (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Region 7E Median Household Income by Race, 2020



COST OF LIVING

According to DEED's [Cost of Living tool](#), the basic needs budget for an average Minnesota family (which consists of 2 adults and 1 child, with 1 full-time and 1 part-time worker) was \$60,540 in 2021. The cost of living for a similar family in Region 7E was \$61,656 – which was the second highest of the 13 EDRs in the state, behind only the Twin Cities metro area. The highest monthly costs were for transportation, food, and housing; and the cost of the region's transportation was significantly higher than the state. In order to meet the basic cost of living for the region, the workers in the family scenario described would need to earn \$19.76 per hour over the course of 60 hours per work week (Table 8).

Table 8. Region 7E Cost of Living, 2022										
Family Composition	Number of Workers	Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Costs						
				Child Care	Food	Health Care	Housing	Transportation	Other	Taxes
Region 7E										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	\$35,868	\$17.24	\$0	\$349	\$157	\$892	\$824	\$340	\$427
Single, 1 child	1 FT	\$58,920	\$28.33	\$949	\$517	\$439	\$1,148	\$830	\$456	\$571
2 parents, 1 child	1 FT, 1 PT	\$61,656	\$19.76	\$475	\$799	\$559	\$1,148	\$972	\$533	\$652
2 parents, 2 children	2 FT	\$90,084	\$21.65	\$1,492	\$1,043	\$570	\$1,596	\$1,030	\$723	\$1,053
State of Minnesota										
Single, 0 children	1 FT	\$33,708	\$16.21	\$0	\$359	\$157	\$903	\$663	\$345	\$382
2 parents, 1 child	1 FT, 1 PT	\$60,540	\$19.40	\$579	\$822	\$561	\$1,151	\$772	\$540	\$620
Source: DEED Cost of Living tool										

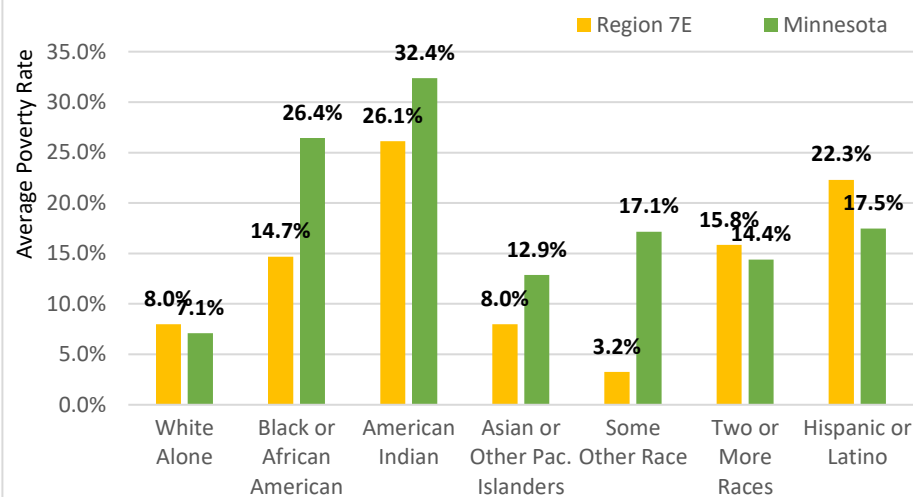
Source: DEED Cost of Living tool

DEED's Cost of Living tool provides different estimates for household compositions including single people, partnered couples, and up to 4 children. For a single person living alone and working full-time, the estimated yearly cost in Region 7E would be \$35,868, which would require an hourly wage of \$17.24 to meet the basic needs standard of living (Table 8). That was again the second highest in the state.

Overall, Region 7E's poverty rate was 8.4%, which was below the statewide rate of 9.3%. Like incomes, poverty levels varied widely by race and origin. It was estimated that over 26% of the region's American Indian and 22.3% of Hispanic or Latinos were below the poverty level in 2020, compared to just 8.0% of the white population. Likewise, poverty levels hovered around 16% those of Two or More Races, and 15% for Black or African Americans.

About 8% percent of Asian or other Pacific Islanders also were below the poverty level in 2020 and only 3.2% of those identifying as Some Other Race were below the poverty level. With the exception of the higher rate for Whites and Hispanics/Latinos, the region's poverty rates were below the statewide rates (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Percent Below the Poverty Level by Race or Origin, 2020



Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey

WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

According to DEED's [Occupational Employment Statistics](#) program, the median hourly wage for all occupations in Region 7E was \$21.95 in the first quarter of 2022, which was the sixth highest wage level of the 13 EDRs in the state. Region 7E's median wage was \$1.86 below the state's median hourly wage, equaling 92.2% of the statewide wage rate, and \$2.52 below the median hourly wage in the 7-County Twin Cities metro area, which would amount to \$5,240 per year for a full-time worker. Region 7E had lower wages than neighboring Regions 7W at \$19.46 and Region 3 at \$22.54, but higher than Region 5 at \$18.83 (Table 9).

Nearly 11% of the jobs in Region 7E were Office & Administrative occupations, which had a slightly lower concentration than the state as a whole. The highest location quotient was for Protective Service, at 1.8. Region 7E also had a higher share of workers in Community & Social Service; Education, Training & Library; Food Preparation & Serving Related; Farming, Fishing, & Forestry; Healthcare Support; Personal Care & Service; and Sales & Related occupations (Table 10).

Table 9. Occupational Employment Statistics by Region, 1 st Qtr. 2022	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment
EDR 1 - Northwest	\$22.41	34,150
EDR 2 - Headwaters	\$19.15	30,150
EDR 3 - Arrowhead	\$22.54	131,110
EDR 4 - West Central	\$19.40	83,490
EDR 5 - North Central	\$18.83	59,090
EDR 6E - Southwest Central	\$18.94	47,920
EDR 6W - Upper MN Valley	\$18.94	15,790
EDR 7E - East Central	\$21.95	45,770
EDR 7W - Central	\$22.94	165,010
EDR 8 - Southwest	\$19.10	50,230
EDR 9 - South Central	\$21.92	96,160
EDR 10 - Southeast	\$23.32	231,930
EDR 11 - 7-County Twin Cities	\$24.47	1,642,620
State of Minnesota	\$23.81	2,695,450

Source: [DEED Occupational Employment Statistics](#)

Table 10. Region 7E Occupational Employment Statistics, 1 st Qtr. 2022					State of Minnesota		
	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment	Share of Total Employment	Location Quotient	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Employment	Share of Total Employment
Total, All Occupations	\$21.95	45,770	100.0%	1.0	\$23.81	2,695,450	100.0%
Management	\$40.74	2,350	5.1%	0.8	\$50.51	181,090	6.7%
Business & Financial Operations	\$30.77	1,380	3.0%	0.4	\$38.08	192,700	7.1%
Computer & Mathematical	\$34.07	340	0.7%	0.2	\$48.34	101,560	3.8%
Architecture & Engineering	\$39.22	660	1.4%	0.7	\$39.39	51,970	1.9%
Life, Physical & Social Science	\$33.47	280	0.6%	0.6	\$37.30	26,140	1.0%
Community & Social Service	\$24.73	1,500	3.3%	1.6	\$24.68	53,670	2.0%
Legal	\$30.87	200	0.4%	0.6	\$40.08	19,860	0.7%
Education, Training & Library	\$26.79	3,470	7.6%	1.4	\$24.48	149,990	5.6%
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	\$24.10	310	0.7%	0.5	\$26.08	36,710	1.4%
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	\$38.08	3,290	7.2%	1.0	\$38.73	190,180	7.1%
Healthcare Support	\$15.62	3,280	7.2%	1.2	\$15.37	162,530	6.0%
Protective Service	\$26.58	1,270	2.8%	1.8	\$25.07	40,580	1.5%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	\$14.53	4,570	10.0%	1.4	\$14.65	198,800	7.4%
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	\$18.30	1,270	2.8%	1.0	\$17.98	75,850	2.8%
Personal Care & Service	\$15.27	1,180	2.6%	1.2	\$15.24	56,580	2.1%
Sales & Related	\$14.83	4,640	10.1%	1.1	\$17.25	245,390	9.1%
Office & Administrative Support	\$22.51	4,890	10.7%	0.9	\$23.12	334,550	12.4%
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	\$19.92	100	0.2%	1.4	\$18.55	4,350	0.2%
Construction & Extraction	\$28.43	2,230	4.9%	1.2	\$30.09	107,180	4.0%
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	\$24.22	1,620	3.5%	1.0	\$25.34	96,660	3.6%
Production	\$20.60	3,690	8.1%	1.1	\$19.59	198,940	7.4%
Transportation & Material Moving	\$18.96	3,270	7.1%	0.9	\$19.30	209,780	7.8%

Source: [DEED Occupational Employment Statistics, Qtr. 1 2022](#)

Not surprisingly, the lowest-paying jobs are concentrated in food prep and serving, building, grounds cleaning and maintenance, sales and related, personal care and service, and healthcare support, which tend to have lower experience and educational requirements. For the most part, the gap in pay between Region 7E and the state is also much lower in these jobs. In contrast, the highest paying jobs are found in management, legal, architecture and engineering, computer and mathematical, healthcare practitioners, business and financial operations, and life, physical, and social science occupations, which all need higher levels of education and experience, including many that require postsecondary training. The pay gaps between the region and state are much bigger in these occupations.

JOB VACANCY SURVEY

Employers in Central Minnesota reported 21,410 job vacancies in the fourth quarter of 2021, which was 7,277 more vacancies compared to one year prior, the highest 4th quarter number on record. Overall, 27% of the openings were part-time, and one-fourth required postsecondary education, and 38% requiring 1 or more years of experience. The percent of job openings requiring a college degree has been relatively stable over time, while the percentage requiring less than a year of prior work experience has been increasing.

The median hourly wage offer for all openings was \$17.26. Wage offers range from under \$15 for Personal Care & Service, Sales & Related, Food Preparation & Serving Related, and Building Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance to \$29 per hour or more for Legal, Computer & Mathematical, and Life, Physical & Social Sciences. The largest number of openings were in Food Preparation & Serving Related, Sales & Related, and Healthcare Practitioners & Technical – those three groups accounted for 40% of the openings in the region (Table 11).

Table 11. Central Minnesota Job Vacancy Survey Results, 4th Qtr. 2021

	Number of Total Vacancies	Percent Part-time	Percent Temporary or Seasonal	Requiring Post-Secondary Education	Requiring 1 or More Years of Experience	Requiring Certificate or License	Median Hourly Wage Offer
Total, All Occupations	21,410	27%	14%	25%	38%	38%	\$17.26
Food Preparation & Serving Related	4,417	36%	1%	1%	22%	8%	\$13.19
Sales & Related	2,028	64%	6%	1%	21%	6%	\$13.02
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	2,021	20%	11%	93%	62%	90%	\$25.51
Healthcare Support	973	46%	9%	30%	26%	58%	\$15.69
Education, Training & Library	894	18%	30%	71%	61%	80%	\$17.28
Office & Administrative Support	865	22%	4%	12%	56%	22%	\$16.78
Personal Care & Service	620	12%	4%	25%	46%	86%	\$11.49
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	612	47%	7%	7%	26%	52%	\$14.72
Community & Social Service	494	21%	6%	62%	56%	95%	\$18.61
Management	442	20%	14%	54%	85%	29%	\$28.11
Architecture & Engineering	258	0%	0%	45%	46%	41%	\$20.98
Protective Service	197	29%	2%	40%	63%	85%	\$22.39
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	160	14%	4%	12%	89%	39%	\$18.57
Computer & Mathematical	79	0%	6%	73%	90%	32%	\$29.29
Life, Physical & Social Sciences	79	3%	4%	99%	87%	84%	\$30.71
Legal	17	0%	1%	100%	100%	70%	\$29.20

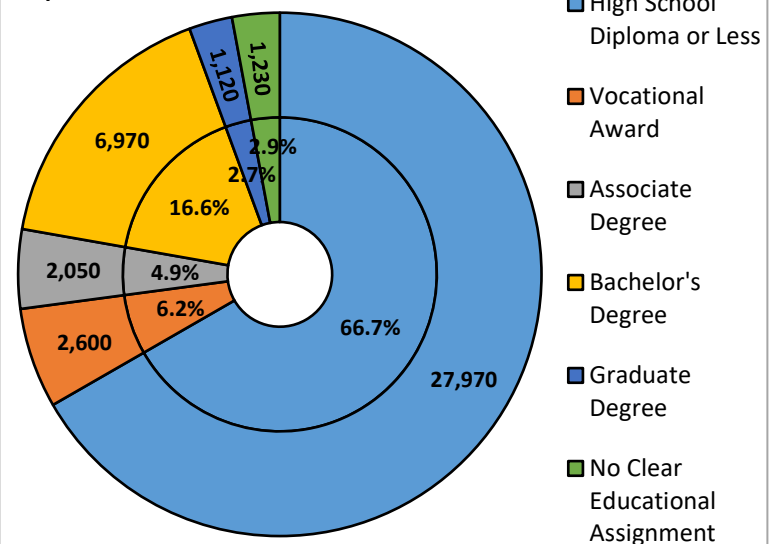
Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, Qtr. 4 2021

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Similar to Job Vacancy Survey results, data from DEED's Occupational Employment Statistics program shows that one-third of current jobs in the region require postsecondary education for entry. The other two-thirds can be started with a high school diploma or less and some amount of on-the-job training (Figure 14).

Certain careers – such as dentists, lawyers, and teachers – require a college education, while other jobs – including cost estimators, sales representatives, and correctional officers – do not. College is an excellent way to move up career ladders and open windows of opportunity to fields that would otherwise be closed, such as nursing or engineering. Many of these occupations offer high wages and are in high demand in the marketplace. While education is typically a worthwhile investment, college can be expensive – with average annual expenses ranging between \$19,500 and more than \$52,000 per year in Minnesota¹. For those who go to college, choice of major matters – different programs lead to different jobs that earn different amounts of money.

Figure 14. Region 7E Share of Jobs by Educational Requirements, 2020

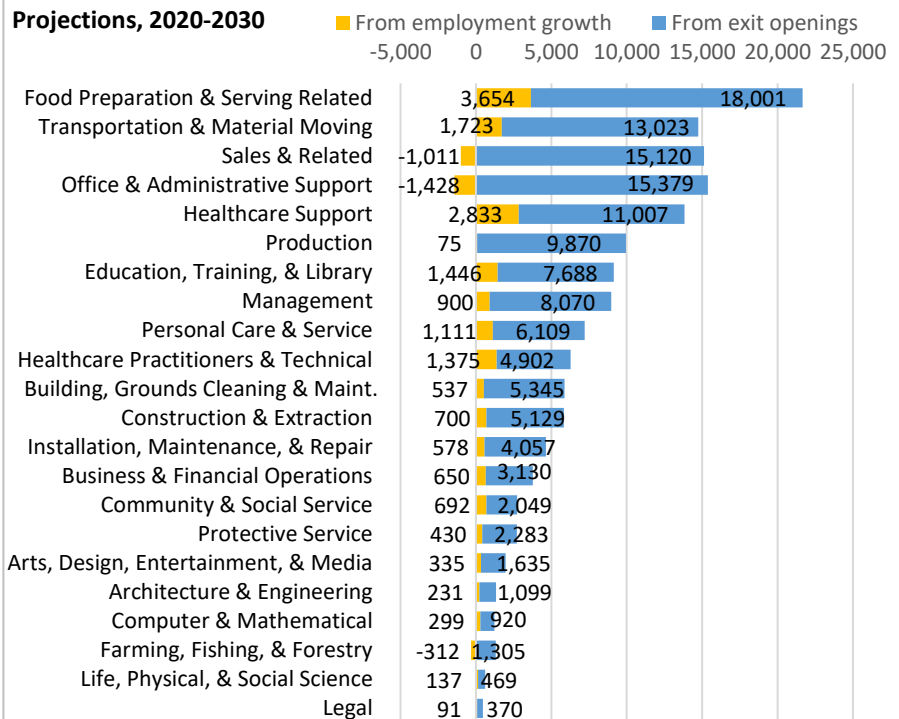


Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics (OES)

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Region 7E is a part of the larger 13-county Central planning area, which is projected to grow 5% percent from 2020 to 2030, a gain of 15,046 new jobs. That is the 5th fastest of the 6 planning regions in the state. In addition, the region is also expected to see an additional 136,960 openings created by workers retiring or leaving the labor force. Food Prep & Serving, Healthcare Support, and Transportation & Material Moving occupations are projected to see the most new growth over the decade and only Sales & Related, Office & Admin Support, and Farming, Fishing & Forestry are expected to see negative employment change (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Central Minnesota Regional Employment Projections, 2020-2030



Source: DEED 2020-2030 Employment Outlook

¹ <http://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=94>

OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

According to DEED's [Occupations in Demand](#) tool, there are many occupations showing relatively high demand in the region, with training and education requirements ranging from short-term on-the-job training to postsecondary education to advanced degrees. Many of the occupations in demand in the region require a high school diploma or less. These occupations are spread across different sectors but are also concentrated in the region's major industries. For example, Home Health & Personal Care Aides, Retail Salespersons, Nurses, Mechanics and Truck Drivers, Machinists, and Teachers are all occupations in demand based on the consistent need for these workers (see Table 12).

Less than High School	High School or Equivalent	Some College, Vocational Training, or Assoc. Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Retail Salespersons \$28,817/yr	Nursing Assistants \$36,077/yr	Registered Nurses \$84,325/yr	Elementary School Teachers \$58,958/yr
Fast Food and Counter Workers \$25,851/yr	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses \$48,600/yr	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers \$67,134/yr	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special & CTE \$64,053/yr
Home Health & Personal Care Aides \$29,471/yr	Machinists \$53,178/yr	Clinical Laboratory Techs \$55,350/yr	General & Operations Managers \$88,723/yr
Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers \$50,278/yr	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics \$44,146/yr	Dental Hygienists \$74,817/yr	Accountants and Auditors \$65,308/yr
Cashiers \$27,062/yr	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists \$34,024/yr	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians \$69,032/yr	Construction Managers \$92,471/yr
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers \$46,230/yr	Medical Assistants \$40,779/yr	Computer Network Support Specialists \$61,398/yr	Project Management Specialists and Business Ops. Specialists \$61,390/yr
Stockers and Order Fillers \$29,612/yr	Computer User Support Specialists \$53,048/yr	Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians \$51,275/yr	Subst. abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors \$52,515/yr
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners \$35,947/yr	Electricians \$64,458/yr	Respiratory Therapists \$73,109/yr	Middle School Teachers, Except Special & CTE \$62,214/yr
Customer Service Representatives \$35,525/yr	Heating, Air Conditioning, & Refrig. Mechanics & Installers \$53,036/yr	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians \$36,602/yr	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term \$34,900/yr
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary \$33,541/yr	Industrial Machinery Mechanics \$61,862/yr	Library Technicians \$40,330/yr	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education \$38,097/yr

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

ECONOMY

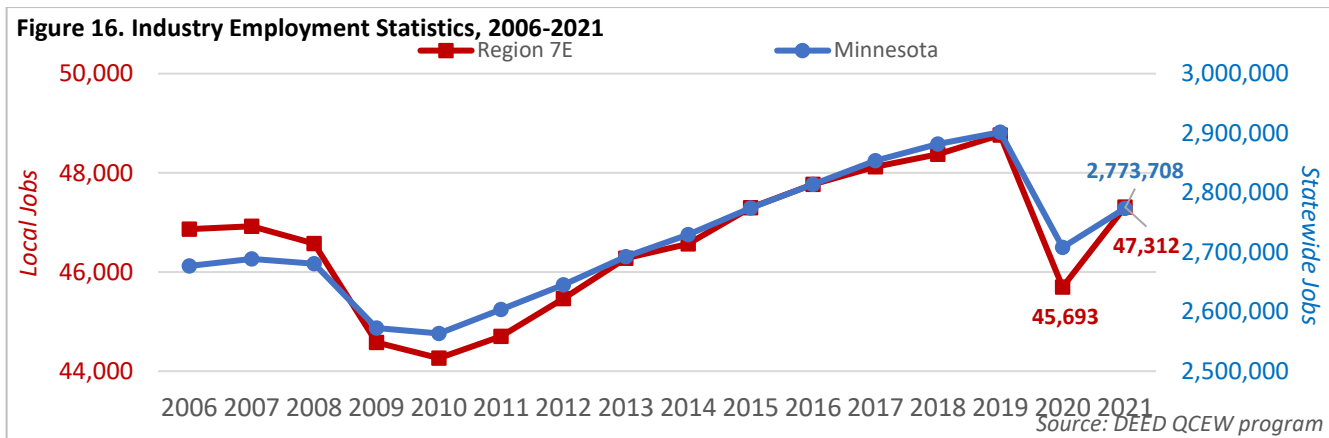
INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

According to DEED's [Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages \(QCEW\) program](#), Region 7E was home to 3,886 business establishments providing 47,312 covered jobs through 2021, with a total payroll of nearly \$2.2 billion. That was about 1.7% of total employment in the state of Minnesota, making it the fourth smallest of the 13 EDRs in the state. Average annual wages were \$45,846 in the region, which was about \$21,200 lower than the state's average annual wage, and the second lowest of the 13 EDRs. Chisago County is the largest employment center in the region, with 15,836 jobs at 1,271 firms; accounting for 33.5% of the region's jobs. Isanti County was the next largest, with 11,089 jobs at 878 firms, followed by Mille Lacs County with 725 firms and 9,139 jobs and Pine County with 7,411 jobs at 676 firms (Table 13).

Table 13. Region 7E Industry Employment Statistics, 2021				Average Annual Wage	2020-2021		2019-2021	
Geography	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll		Change in Jobs	Percent Change	Change in Jobs	Percent Change
Region 7E	3,886	47,312	\$2,169,076,675	\$45,846	+1,619	+3.5%	-1,451	-3.0%
Chisago Co.	1,271	15,836	\$808,414,497	\$51,049	+722	+4.8%	+233	+1.5%
Isanti Co.	878	11,089	\$502,267,792	\$45,294	+185	+1.7%	-93	-0.8%
Kanabec Co.	336	3,836	\$176,933,136	\$46,124	+136	+3.7%	-71	-1.8%
Mille Lacs Co.	725	9,139	\$395,647,846	\$43,292	+416	+4.8%	-586	-6.0%
Pine Co.	676	7,411	\$285,813,404	\$38,566	+159	+2.2%	-933	-11.2%
State of Minnesota	185,788	2,773,708	\$185,969,067,414	\$67,047	+65,907	+2.4%	-127,924	-4.4%

Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW).

Region 7E has seen employment ups and downs over the past 15 years, but ended 2019 with about 2,150 more jobs than it had in 2014. The region was initially hit harder by the pandemic than the state, but has recovered more quickly into 2021. Before the pandemic, job growth had been steady out of the Great Recession. Region 7E finally regained all the jobs lost during the recession in 2015, while the state reached breakeven in 2013 (Figure 16).



With 9,575 jobs at 521 firms, Health Care & Social Assistance is the largest employing industry in Region 7E, accounting for 20.2% of total jobs in the region. Due to the region's older population, the largest sector was Nursing & Residential Care Facilities which had 3,946 jobs. However, the region's fastest growing Health Care sector was Social Assistance including housing, food, family, child care and other social services.

Retail Trade is the next largest industry in Region 7E, with 6,444 jobs at 462 firms, accounting for 13.6% of total jobs in the region. Accommodation & Food Services is the third largest industry with 5,463 jobs at 294 stores, but was hit especially hard during the pandemic, remaining down more than 1,000 jobs. The related Arts, Entertainment & Recreation industry also provided 633 jobs at 82 locations, also suffering significant employment losses during the pandemic. These three industries provide 26.5% of the region's jobs but have relatively low wages.

With 5,157 jobs at 250 firms Manufacturing is the fourth largest industry in Region 7E and saw above average growth over the past year. Wages in manufacturing were almost \$8,000 higher than in the total of all industries. Region 7E also has a high concentration of public sector jobs in Educational Services, with 4,386 jobs at 76 institutions – primarily at Elementary & Secondary Schools, but also at Junior Colleges.

Twelve of the 20 main industries in the region remain down from their pre-pandemic employment levels, with the largest relative deficits in Arts, Entertainment & Recreation, Accommodation & Food Services, Real Estate, and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting. Most industries have started to add jobs back since 2020, with the largest growth in some of those same industries that saw the largest initial declines, but also Admin Support and Management, which grew throughout the pandemic period.

Table 14. Region 7E Industry Employment Statistics, 2021

NAICS Industry Title	2021 Annual Data			Avg. Annual Wage	2020-2021		2019-2021	
	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll (\$1,000s)		Change in Jobs	Percent Change	Change in Jobs	Percent Change
Total, All Industries	3,886	47,312	\$2,169,077	\$45,846	+1,619	+3.5%	-1,451	-3.0%
Health Care & Social Assistance	521	9,575	\$464,728	\$48,536	+155	+1.6%	-286	-2.9%
Retail Trade	462	6,444	\$201,437	\$31,260	+161	+2.6%	+97	+1.5%
Accommodation & Food Services	294	5,463	\$128,701	\$23,559	+437	+8.7%	-1,019	-15.7%
Manufacturing	250	5,157	\$277,058	\$53,725	+250	+5.1%	+5	+0.1%
Educational Services	76	4,386	\$210,305	\$47,949	+5	+0.1%	-379	-8.0%
Public Administration	152	3,958	\$208,964	\$52,795	-22	-0.6%	-233	-5.6%
Construction	644	3,123	\$193,260	\$61,883	+113	+3.8%	+219	+7.5%
Other Services	383	1,408	\$41,175	\$29,244	+103	+7.9%	-94	-6.3%
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	163	1,396	\$79,132	\$56,685	+246	+21.4%	+377	+37.0%
Transportation & Warehousing	176	1,319	\$59,090	\$44,799	+57	+4.5%	+115	+9.6%
Professional & Technical Services	198	1,282	\$122,676	\$95,691	+21	+1.7%	+24	+1.9%
Finance & Insurance	131	957	\$57,967	\$60,571	+10	+1.1%	-8	-0.8%
Wholesale Trade	110	738	\$36,414	\$49,341	+26	+3.7%	+6	+0.8%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	82	633	\$11,724	\$18,521	+51	+8.8%	-161	-20.3%
Information	48	532	\$25,289	\$47,536	-1	-0.2%	-56	-9.5%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	51	306	\$11,139	\$36,401	-6	-1.9%	-49	-13.8%
Utilities	21	247	\$23,509	\$95,179	-1	-0.4%	-8	-3.1%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	112	228	\$7,413	\$32,515	-14	-5.8%	-38	-14.3%
Management of Companies	9	119	\$6,819	\$57,302	+33	+38.4%	+37	+45.1%
Mining	6	38	\$2,275	\$59,875	-2	-5.0%	-1	-2.6%

Source: [DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages \(QCEW\)](#)

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

According to DEED's Quarterly Employment Demographics (QED) program, the workforce in the region was aging over the past 10 years. Nearly one-quarter (24.4%) of workers in the region were 55 years or older, compared to 22.1% statewide and just 19.4% in the region one decade earlier. In contrast, the percentage of workers aged 20-24 or 45-54 was falling. (Table 15).

As noted above, wages were climbing across the board for all workers due to rising demand and a tight labor market. While wages were still lowest for the youngest and oldest workers who tend to fill lower-skilled, less-than-fulltime jobs in industries like Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Services, the two youngest age groups enjoyed the fastest percentage increase in wages from 2011 to 2021. Wages were highest for workers between 45 and 64 years of age, and males earned more per hour than females, though the gap narrowed slightly, both in pay and hours worked.

Table 15. Workforce Demographics by Age Group and Gender, Total of All Industries, 2011-2021

Region 7E	Percentage of Workers		Percent of Workers, Minnesota		Median Hourly Wage		Median Hours Worked (Per Qtr.)	
	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011	2021	2011
Total, all ages	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	\$19.91	\$13.96	373	383
19 years & under	9.5%	8.2%	6.4%	6.0%	\$12.60	\$7.65	137	125
20 to 24 years	8.8%	10.5%	9.4%	11.1%	\$16.78	\$10.17	297	273
25 to 44 years	39.1%	38.5%	43.5%	42.6%	\$22.22	\$15.57	425	420
45 to 54 years	18.3%	23.3%	18.6%	22.5%	\$24.03	\$16.48	450	453
55 to 64 years	18.3%	15.2%	17.0%	14.4%	\$22.00	\$16.22	440	439
65 years & over	6.1%	4.2%	5.1%	3.4%	\$17.60	\$12.50	235	218
Male	43.9%	43.1%	49.2%	49.0%	\$21.88	\$15.57	436	439
Female	56.1%	56.9%	50.8%	51.0%	\$18.97	\$12.99	347	350

Source: [DEED Quarterly Employment Demographics](#)

EMPLOYMENT DIVERSITY

People of color account for 9.5% of the total population in Region 7E and hold 8.4% of jobs, compared to the state overall where they amount to 22.5% of the population but only hold 15.2% of jobs. According data from the Quarterly Workforce Indicator program people of color held 3,989 jobs compared to 43,772 jobs held by White Workers. The number of jobs has more than doubled since 2000 when people of color held just 4.1% of jobs (See Figure 17).

People of color have filled an additional 2,393 jobs since 2000 compared to 6,144 by White workers, amounting to 28% of all new jobs. Hispanic/Latino workers hold the largest number of jobs of the racial and ethnic groups after whites with 1,114 jobs in 2021, a third of all Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) held jobs. The next largest number of jobs held by BIPOC workers was American Indian or Alaska Natives, holding 898 jobs in 2021. The number of jobs held by this group increased by 528 since 2000, amounting to a 143% increase. Asian employment was the fastest growing, expanding 210% from 2000 (See Figure 18).

The Public Administration and Accommodation & Food Services sectors have the highest share of BIPOC employment at 16% and 13.7%, respectively. Admin Support and Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing also had more than 10% BIPOC workers. The largest number of workers of color are employed by Accommodation & Food Services (726 jobs) and Healthcare & Social Assistance (712 jobs) (Figure 19).

Figure 17. Employment Share & Ethnicity in Region 7E, 2000-2021

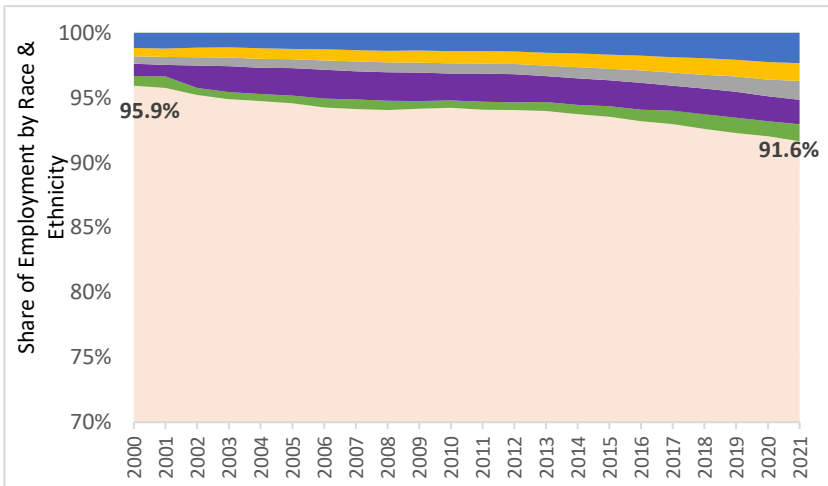


Figure 18. People of Color Employment in Region 7E, 2000-2021

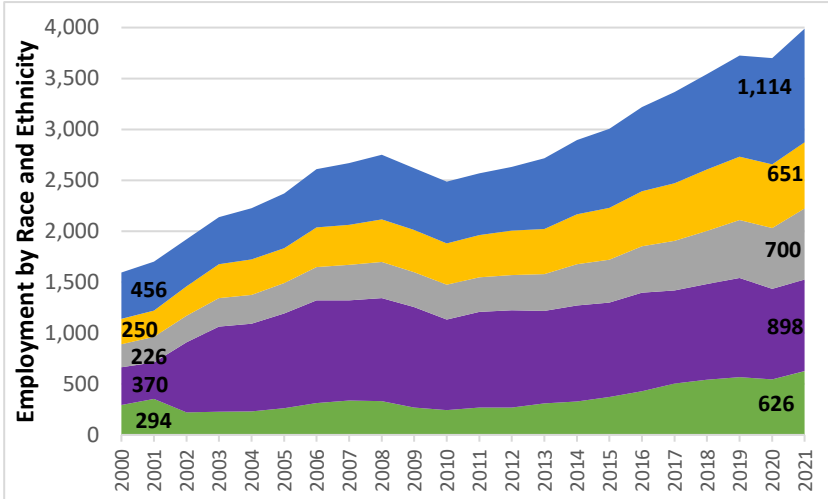
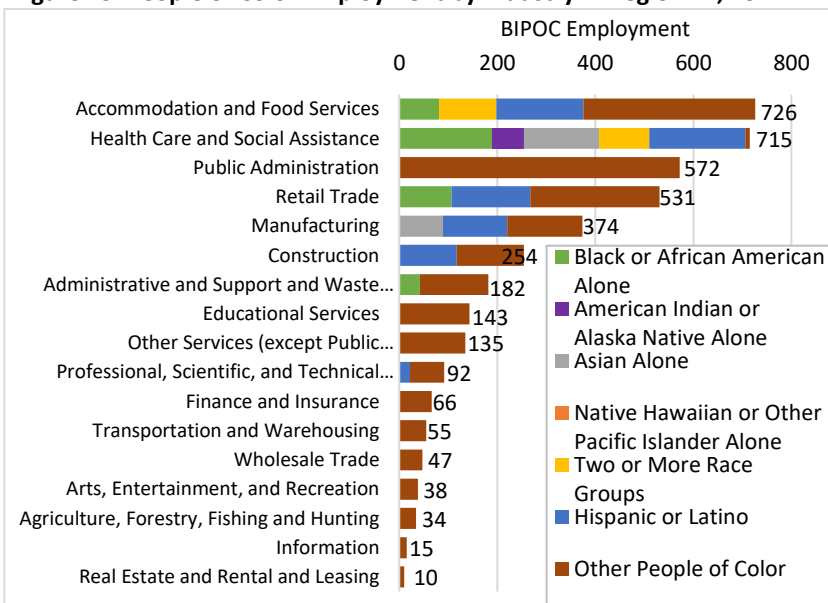


Figure 19. People of Color Employment by Industry in Region 7E, 2021



Source: US Census Quarterly Workforce Indicators

INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

As noted above, Central Minnesota is projected to grow 5% from 2020 to 2030, a gain of 15,046 new jobs, which would make it the 5th fastest growing region in the state. The largest and fourth fastest growing industry is expected to be Healthcare & Social Assistance, which may account for one-third (36.8%) of total projected growth in the region by 2030. The region is also expected to see significant employment growth in Accommodation & Food Services, Educational Services, and Other Services. The fastest growing industries were many that suffered the largest losses during the pandemic. In contrast, Real Estate, Utilities, Agriculture, and Retail are all expected to suffer job cuts in the next decade (Table 16).

Industry	Estimated Employment 2020	Projected Employment 2030	Percent Change 2020-2030	Numeric Change 2020-2030
Total, All Industries	301,170	316,216	+5.0%	+15,046
Health Care & Social Assistance	46,672	52,213	+11.9%	+5,541
Accommodation & Food Services	19,327	23,505	+21.6%	+4,178
Educational Services	23,734	24,976	+5.2%	+1,242
Other Services	10,108	11,290	+11.7%	+1,182
Manufacturing	39,543	40,646	+2.8%	+1,103
Public Administration	19,239	20,198	+5.0%	+959
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	2,636	3,456	+31.1%	+820
Construction	18,984	19,792	+4.3%	+808
Transportation & Warehousing	10,098	10,685	+5.8%	+587
Professional & Technical Services	6,685	7,228	+8.1%	+543
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt.	9,545	10,066	+5.5%	+521
Wholesale Trade	10,123	10,516	+3.9%	+393
Information	2,639	2,842	+7.7%	+203
Finance & Insurance	7,796	7,912	+1.5%	+116
Mining	364	386	+6.0%	+22
Management of Companies	1,877	1,891	+0.7%	+14
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	1,754	1,737	-1.0%	-17
Utilities	1,952	1,686	-13.6%	-266
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & hunt	5,052	4,493	-11.1%	-559
Retail Trade	35,588	33,781	-5.1%	-1,807

Source: DEED 2020-2030 Employment Outlook

NONEMPLOYER ESTABLISHMENTS

Region 7E was home to 10,884 self-employed businesses or “nonemployers” in 2019, which are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as “businesses without paid employees that are subject to federal income tax, originating from tax return information of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).” Unlike covered employment, Region 7E saw a steady decline in nonemployers over the past decade, responding to economic changes. In sum, the region lost 653 nonemployers from 2009 to 2019, a -5.7% decrease. Together, these nonemployers in Region 7E generated sales receipts of \$497.3 million in 2019 (Table 17).

	2019		2009-2019	
	Number of Firms	Receipts (\$1,000s)	Change in Firms	Percent Change
Region 7E	10,884	\$497,327	-653	-5.7%
Chisago Co.	3,724	\$172,482	-163	-4.2%
Isanti Co.	2,696	\$127,302	-63	-2.3%
Kanabec Co.	1,059	\$50,098	-83	-7.3%
Mille Lacs Co.	1,682	\$72,291	-208	-11.0%
Pine Co.	1,723	\$75,154	-136	-7.3%
State of Minnesota	418,080	\$20,377,253	+39,926	+10.6%

Source: U.S. Census, Nonemployer Statistics program

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Unlike other parts of Greater Minnesota, agriculture is not a key industry in Region 7E, with 3,780 farms producing just under \$215 million in the market value of products sold in 2017 according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. All of the counties in the planning region rank near the bottom in Minnesota in regards to the market value of products sold, with all five counties ranked between 69th and 75th of the 87 counties in the state (Table 18). Market value of products sold has decreased by 20% in 2012.

	Number of Farms	Market Value of Products Sold	State Rank
Region 7E	3,780	\$214,252,000	11
Chisago Co.	821	\$52,838,000	69
Isanti Co.	805	\$48,673,000	70
Kanabec Co.	624	\$29,832,000	75
Mille Lacs Co.	707	\$43,931,000	72
Pine Co.	823	\$38,978,000	73
Minnesota	68,822	\$18,395,390,000	

Source: 2017 Census of Agriculture

Upon request, this information can be made available in alternate formats for people with disabilities by contacting Luke Greiner at 320-223-6992 or at luke.greiner@state.mn.us